

Dear Neighbor:

I must drive up I-84 every day I go to work for you in Hartford. Congested? You Bet! You know it too. This continues to be a top 3 issue on my yearly survey I send to you, and has been your number one concern for 2 of the last 3 years.

Traffic congestion in Connecticut – whether on I-84, I-95, I-91 or the Merritt Parkway– lasts many, many hours. Tie-ups can and do happen all day long and the problem is obvious: businesses no longer want to locate here. If they leave, our jobs and superior quality of life will leave with them. In fact, a transportation expert warned that Connecticut would become an economic dead-end if something isn't done. That is why I sponsored and supported the creation of the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB).

How will we pay for this? 1) From oil companies. 2) The average driver will contribute only an additional \$4.50 a year in license and registration fees and, in return, be able to move around the state quicker and safer.

What would happen if we don't do this? Speaker Moira Lyons said it best: "...if we don't do this, we might as well hang up a sign on the Connecticut border saying, 'Please do not enter; You might not get out.'"

This newsletter describes the work your state government is doing to relieve congestion. I hope you find this information useful. Please call me if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Transportation Update - 2003

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**Taking Aim
At
Highway Congestion**



Transportation Strategy Board



The General Assembly created a fund for use on Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) projects to ease the movement of people and goods throughout the state and to solve gridlock problems and reduce congestion in Greater Danbury.

The fund is created by oil company revenue transfers and a modest increase in motor vehicle and registration fees. While no one wants to raise these fees, it should be noted that motor vehicle fees have not been increased in more than a decade and these increases are all dedicated to easing traffic problems.

The legislation adopts a statewide transportation strategy which: 1) includes a set of principles to future transportation decisions; 2) requires an economic analysis of the impact of transportation projects on economic development; and 3) combines projects identified by the TSB with the Department of Transportation's 20-year plan to get federal dollars to reach our goal.

Priority projects are not limited to Greater Danbury, since the problem of traffic congestion exists statewide. Projects identified for consideration include: 1) funding for improvements to I-84; 2) expanded rail passenger service through Danbury to New Milford; 3) new railroad cars for the Metro-North line; 4) new and expanded rail stations in the hub cities; 5) express bus service to Bradley Airport; 6) an additional \$200,000 for the Danbury Area Feeder Bus Service - Harlem Line; 7) use of feeder-barge service to remove traffic from Interstate 95 and to bring containers from New York and New Jersey ports to Connecticut via the Long Island Sound; 8) commuter rail service from New Haven to Hartford and Springfield.

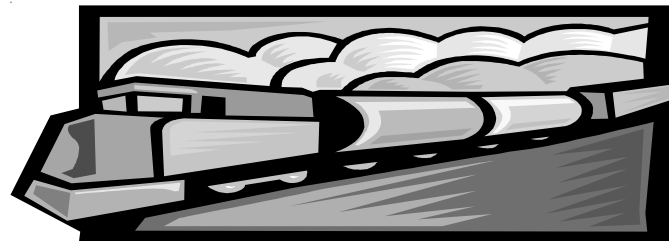
State Funding: Special Transportation Fund

The Special Transportation Fund (STF) was fully established by the General Assembly in 1984. The STF is a dedicated fund for the financing of investment in the State's transportation system and covers the cost of operating the Department of Transportation and all the services it provides. Bradley International Airport has its own dedicated fund, the Bradley Enterprise Fund, that finances the airport's operating and capital program.

SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND SOURCES OF REVENUE

- ✓ Gasoline Tax
- ✓ Diesel Fuel Tax
- ✓ Motor Vehicle Licenses, Permits and Fees
- ✓ Federal Transit Administration Operating Assistance Grants
- ✓ Interest Income
- ✓ Oil Company Tax
- ✓ Department of Motor Vehicle Sales Tax
- ✓ Transfers from General Fund

The Special Transportation Fund revenue for fiscal year 2003 is estimated to be \$827 million.



Why Can't We Reinstate The Tolls?

Tolls on Connecticut highways and bridges were removed once the cost of building was recovered. The major toll removal effort occurred in 1983. At that time there were three major toll systems still in operation in Connecticut - the Connecticut Turnpike (eight toll stations on I-95 from Greenwich to Plainfield), the Merritt and Wilbur Cross Parkways (three toll stations in Greenwich, Milford, and Wallingford) and the Hartford area bridges (the Putnam, Bissell, and Charter Oak bridges). Closure of parkway tolls came in 1986.

Not only do toll stops cause back-ups and increased traffic, but if the state reinstated tolls significant federal funds would be withheld or have to be repaid. Federal law generally prohibits roads receiving federal aid from having tolls.



As cars sit in line to pay the toll it concentrates the exhaust fumes at specific locations, causing extra air pollution in those areas that are in close proximity of toll stops. Even with new electronic toll collection methods, waiting vehicles would add to the pollution problem, especially in Fairfield and New Haven Counties.

Toll booths are design barriers that require vehicles to change lanes, decelerate and accelerate, or merge, increasing the potential for accidents and adding to traffic congestion. Several deaths had resulted from accidents caused at or by toll booths so in the mid-80's we abandoned the toll system. There is no need to revert back to this system when you consider the minor fee increases are much less than paying daily tolls up and down our highways - **and fairer!**

any questions or comments? contact Bob Godfrey at 800-842-1902